

started to ring off the hook in the Parliamentarian's office, saying that a page was presiding over the House of Representatives.

But I thank Charlie. All too often, people who work in the middle of the night, people who are seated in front of me, do not get the recognition that is due.

And I want to thank the people of Louisiana. The people of Louisiana have been very good to me and my family. I was elected to office before I had the opportunity to serve in this great body. Nine years ago, the people of the 14th Senatorial District thought enough of me to elect me to the State Senate at the ripe age of 24.

I thank the people of Louisiana for giving me the opportunity to serve not only in this Congress but for giving me the opportunity to serve at such a young age in this Congress as well as the State Senate of Louisiana. And I am so grateful that they put their trust and confidence in me at such a young age. So I am very grateful to the many people who have supported me throughout the years.

And I want to give a special thanks to the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Before I went out into this Congress, Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, that body embraced me and took me under their wings and somewhat taught me the ropes of this great body and the way this body operates.

The Congressional Black Caucus has been, and will always be perhaps, the conscience of this Congress, and perhaps it is the conscience of this country. And I want to thank the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus for their leadership.

I want to thank my wife and my son for giving me the opportunity to fly to this great place and do the people's business of Louisiana.

I want to thank, finally, Judge Leon Higginbotham, who worked so hard to keep me and Members like me in this body and in State legislatures all across this country.

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I want to thank Leon Higginbotham for taking a case pro bono and trying to defend the civil rights of so many people across this country and also want to thank the NAACP Legal Defense Fund who have worked so hard to preserve civil rights for so many Americans. I want to thank the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights. I want to thank attorney Frank Garvin and attorney Earnest Johnson from Louisiana who fought so hard to keep people like me in elected office and protecting their constitutional rights.

Lastly, I want to thank the Members of the Louisiana legislative black caucus who fought so hard for the creation of the district that I have had the opportunity to represent. I want to thank them for their hard work and for all that they have done.

This, Mr. Speaker, tonight, is not a permanent retirement. In life, people

change professions, some two, some three, some even seven times. This is a change of profession. I have enjoyed my service here in this Congress, and I am ready to move on and do other things. But this should not be viewed as a permanent retirement. It should be viewed as a temporary retirement with a certain return. I am only 33, and in 6 years I plan to join this body again and hopefully I will have the opportunity to do that.

Shakespeare once said that life is like a play, we all have an opportunity to go on stage and play our part and perform and do our very best while we are in the spotlight. Then after our act ends, we must exit the stage and let a new act begin.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that I have had an opportunity to do my job on this stage. I thank the people of Louisiana and thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank each and every last Member of this great and distinguished body. I am not bitter leaving here tonight. This body has made me better.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. COBLE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. COBLE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

RETIREMENT REMARKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mrs. COLLINS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, many years ago when my husband George and I were making decisions about our future careers, I decided that I wanted to be a tax attorney and had thought seriously of attending law school. George, on the other hand, decided that he wanted to become an elected official in the city of Chicago politics.

Well, as our lives unfolded, he became the committeeman of the 24th Ward regular Democratic organization in Chicago's west side and in 1973 its alderman in the Chicago city council. Following that he was elected to become a member of this illustrious body in the 91st Congress and served here until his ill-fated airplane crash that claimed his life on December 8, 1972.

I, of course, was suddenly a widow with an awesome responsibility of rearing our 13-year-old son alone. But apparently I was not destined to become a lawyer but instead to become a maker of laws. On June 7, 1973, I was elected to fill his unexpired term and represent the people of Chicago, IL's Seventh Congressional District in the 93d Congress.

When I arrived here, it was during one of the most exciting and challenging periods of my life and in our Nation's history. Liberalism was not the

dirty word that it appears to be today. The feminist movement was in high gear. And the Vietnam War was raging. Watergate was just about to unfold. Yes, those were heady times. The Equal Rights Amendment had just passed the House of Representatives the year before. And learning the truth about the break-in at the Democratic headquarters in Watergate and urging Congress to set a date certain for the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam were the three most pressing issues that I faced in this body.

At the same time, of course, I had to confront the most stressful and emotional issue of all, and that was the bereavement of my husband and of leaving my son behind to be cared for by my now dear departed mother who did an excellent job.

Upon this last time that I will stand in this well in this body, I am saddened for many reasons. First, because I will be saying goodbye to the wonderful, trusting, supportive constituents of Illinois's Seventh Congressional District. I thank them for the confidence they have shown in my ability to represent their interests and to advocate for their concerns in this body for nearly 24 years.

Second, I will truly miss my friend, BILL CLAY of Missouri, CHARLE RANGEL of New York and LOU STOKES of Ohio, who immediately took me under their wings and have been my mentors and staunchest supporters throughout all of these years. I will also miss CARRIE MEEK and other women in the women's caucus and the black caucus. I have enjoyed their affection throughout this time and have given affection back to them.

I do not want to leave here without saying thank you to my chairman, JOHN DINGELL, who allowed me a free hand in chairing the Commerce Committee that was entitled Commerce, Consumer Protection and Competitiveness during the 102d and the 103d Congress.

I salute our friend who is no longer here, Jack Brooks, who allowed me to chair several subcommittees under the old Government Operations Committee.

I thank, too, my wonderful administrative assistant who has been with me for 16 of these long years, Bud Myers. And Gerri Houston, my executive assistant who has been here almost the same amount of time. Benny Montgomery my acting district administrator in Chicago, and all of the staff people both on my congressional offices here and in Chicago as well as David Schooler, our counselor on the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight who has been with me for a long time, and others on that committee who have served with all their dedication and loyalty for all of these years.

Each of them has made my job serving the Seventh Congressional District so much more pleasurable and so much easier than it could have been otherwise.